

**Historic District Commission
Town Hall, Room 126
Final Meeting Minutes, February 25, 2015**

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM. Attending David Foley (DF), David Honn (DH), Pamela Lynn (PL), Ron Regan (RR) Anita Rogers (AR), Mike Gowing (MG)

Absent: Kathy Acerbo-Bachmann (KAB), David Shoemaker (DS)

7:30 PM Citizens' Comments and Questions

DH shared that he had learned from CPC member Andrew Magee that there are no applications for the Historic Funds which are required to be a minimum of 10% of the total. David is interested in building local awareness and suggesting possible uses.

Possible uses:

A-Freedom's Way organization which is trying to join revolutionary war towns in activities with Federal funding and guidelines.

B- Funding for a consultant to help establish an additional Historic District in Acton (Maple / martin / central streets?)

C- Develop the Asa Parlin House as a volunteer's office

D- Funding for a consultant to write zoning and / or sign bylaws.

DH has emailed Corey for an update re: fence @ West Acton RR tracks and also for an update on the Acton Center traffic study.

7:35 PM Approved Minutes by Consent: February 2, 2015

7:40 PM 14 Newtown Road – Appl. #1510

Applicant was absent so discussion was postponed.

7:45 PM 81 River Street – Appl. #1504: Fence

Applicant not able to attend.

This fence has already been installed though an application was not filed, nor was a certificate issued. DH regrets that the pickets are tightly spaced which is unlike other

fences in the neighborhood. PL agrees. DH moves that we accept the after-the-fact installation of an unfinished 6' tall wood plank fence with wood post caps.

Finding: The fence was installed without permission. The HDC would have required a 4' tall open picket fence similar to the other approved fences. In light of that, the HDC will require that evergreen landscape screening with a mature height of 4' minimum be installed that obscures that portion of the fence that is parallel to River St. The homeowner should submit a sketch of the planting plan to the HDC before installing the selected plantings. Seconded by AR. Unanimously accepted.

8:15 PM 16-18 School St. - Windows and Garage Doors

A motion was made to allow installation of the wood replacement sash by April 30th instead of the current March 31st deadline. Seconded by DH. Unanimously accepted. A repair in-kind of the existing wood garage door will require an application for a certificate of non-applicability. If the door is not repairable, any new door would require a certificate and specifications / samples to be submitted and approved before installation.

8:30 PM Zoning Articles & Sign Bylaw

MG confirmed that changes to the HDC bylaw will require some public meetings for input and explanation purposes and, eventually, a 2/3 majority vote at TM. Setting a goal of the Fall TM would allow time for this process and for the necessary polishing of the language.

Zoning Articles update from DH:

Scott Kutil has been working on 2 issues with regard to the zoning.

1- the possibility of adding footnotes to implement zoning changes
With regard to the footnotes approach, Roland expressed concern about the requirement for "uniformity" and footnotes specific to the Historic Districts would have violated that. This concern was confirmed by an attorney. Instead, it will be necessary to make changes to the zoning code. DH expects to push for the changes to be on the warrant at the Fall Town Meeting. Informational meetings will need to be held in advance for voters to understand the purpose of the changes.

2- a study of the issue of hammerhead lots.

SK has written a memo that shows that the current zoning would allow (2) hammerhead lots in Acton center, (0) in South Acton and (8) in West Acton. It would violate the uniformity issue to specifically eliminate the hammerhead lots.

If the Historic Districts become zoning districts, however, the uniformity issue is not relevant.

The recommended proposal would be to change the Chapter P bylaw to remove the limit of dimensional restrictions and possibly height restrictions (to allow a steeple or cupola). If separate Historic Zoning Districts are being established it may make sense to add Maple Street. Perhaps it would make sense to apply for CPC funds to do the research for that.

8:50 PM Moved to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Rogers
HDC Member